PROPHECIES ABOUT OCCULTATION OF IMAM AL-MAHDI (A.S.)

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Printed & Published by:
BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA
P.O.Box 20033
Dar-es-Salaam
Tanzania

ISBN: 9987 620 23 X
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Publisher:
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania
Typeset By:
Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) Assembly of Tanzania
Printer:
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania
First Edition:
1423 / 2002
Copies:
2000
BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA
P.O.BOX 20033
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PREFACE

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad & his Progeny

This booklet contains some Prophecies about the Occultation of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.). It shows that this belief was prevalent among the Shi'as and even some Sunnis right from the time of the Leader of the Faithful, 'Ali (a.s.) Poems based on this belief were composed and recited in the presence of Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.). It also points to some historical developments that re-confirm the existence and impact of those prophecies. Three great non-Shi'a traditionists wrote books on Imam al-Mahdi's *ghaybah* long before his birth in 255 A.H.

They undeniably prove the truth of the Occultation and Re-appearance of the Sahibu 'l-'Asr — the Master of this Time. May Allah hasten his reappearance.

WaBillahi 't-tawfiq

14lh. Shawwal, 1422 — Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
30th. December, 2001 — Dar-es-Salaam

PROPHECIES ABOUT OCCULTATION OF IMAM AL-MAHDI (A.S.)

The belief in an ideal future (in which justice and equity would reign in place of the present injustice and oppression, and which would be ushered in through divine power) is not just an Islamic dogma; it is a natural instinct ingrained in human soul and mind by the Creator. That is why this belief is shared by all religions; it is a common heritage of all who believe in a Creator. The Hindus are awaiting their 10^{lh} Avatar to begin the Satya Yugya (era of truth); the Zoroastrians hope for the rule of Ahura Mazda; the Jews are still waiting for the Messiah, and the Christians look forward to his second coming. Not only the followers of religion, even the pagan Greeks longed for an Utopia, and the confirmed atheists, i.e. the communists, piously teach that a time would come when complete equality and equity would reign on the earth, and the society would be cleansed of oppression and tyranny (even that of the state!)

The universal acceptance of this idea and ideal shows that it is a divinely-inspired goal which the humanity is irresistibly proceeding to. What the Islam and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did was to give us the good news that that era was near at hand, that the awaited divine rule was to be established not in some unknown generation, but specifically by his 12th successor. In the year 256 A.H. that successor was born. The hope culminated into fulfilment, the future became present, the unseen materialised into the seen, and the universal aspiration of a golden age was personified in al-Mahdi, turning the prophecies into a fact.

The belief in al-Mahdi was not a wishful thinking of Shi'as. Long before the birth of al-Mahdi, Imam Ahrned ibn Hanbal (died 240 A.H./855 CE) and Imam al-Bukhari (died 256 A.H./870 CE) had recorded the prophecies of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the

advent of Al-Mahdi. Before them, their Shaykh, Hafiz Nu'aym ibn Hammad who was a contemporary of Imam 'Ali Rida (a.s.) and died in 228 A.H. in the life of al-Mahdi's great-grand father, Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), wrote *Kitabu '1-Fitan*[1] in the fifth chapter of which he has recorded in full detail the traditions which he had received about al-Mahdi (a.s.). His asnad is very high; he narrates only through three or four intermediaries from 'Ali (a.s.) and other companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about al-Mahdi (a.s.) Even after al-Mahdi\s birth, when it was a common knowledge that the Shi'a, after the death of their 1 l^lh Imam were believing in his son as the promised al-Mahdi (and who had gone into hiding), the Sunni scholars of tradition went on recording those prophecies of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) with utmost care in their books, and especially in the books collectively known as "the six correct books." There are at least 400 traditions from the prophet narrated in the Sunni books; and Shaykh Lutfullah as-Safi has collected in his book, *Muntakhabu 'l-athar Fi '1-Imami 'th-Thani'ashar* 600 traditions from Sunni and Shi'a sources.

A gist of those prophetic traditions is found in the following writing of the famous Sunni Sufi, Shaykh Muhyiddin ibn al-Arabi al-Undulusi. He writes in *al-Futuhatu 'l-Makkiyah:-*

"Know that al-Mahdi (Allah be pleased with him) must certainly appear. But he will not appear until the world becomes full of tyranny and injustice, then he will fill it with justice and equity; and if there is no more than one day remaining from (the appointed age of) the world, Allah will elongate that day to enable this Caliph to rule. And he (i.e. al-Mahdi) is from the progeny of the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace from Allah be upon him), from the children of Fatimah (Allah be pleased with her!); his forefather is al-Husayn son of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib; his father is al Hasan al-Askari, (who is) son of Imam 'Ali an-Naqi, son of Imam

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[1] The manuscript of this book is in the Istanbul Library; and 1 have got the photocopy of the 5th Chapter in my personal library.

Muhammad al-Taqi, son of Imam ' Ali ar-Rida, son of Imam Musa al-Kazim, son of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, son of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, son of Imam Zaynul Abidin, son of Imam Husayn, son of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. His name is the name of the Messenger of Allah (i.e. Muhammad). The Muslims will do his *bay'ah* (i.e. will declare their allegiance to him) between ar-Rukn (al- Yamani) and Maqamu (Ibrahim); He will be like the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace from Allah be upon him!) in appearance, and below him in character because nobody can be like the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace from Allah be upon him!) in character, as Allah says: "Verily thou art on great character." ..... He will distribute the wealth equally and will do justice to (his) subjects ..... Many more people will abstain from sin because of his fear rather than because of the Qur'an. (Because of his blessings) a man who would be ignorant, coward and miser in the evening will become learned, brave and generous in the morning. Help (of God) will walk in his front..... He will follow the footsteps of the messenger of Allah, and he will commit no mistake; there will be an angel supporting him without his seeing him, he will raise up the weary, and help the weak His action will be according to his words, and his words according to his deeds ..... He will destroy injustice as well as unjust, and will raise the religion and put the life back into Islam. Allah, through him, will strengthen the Islam after its dishonour, and make it alive after its death. He will revoke *jizyah,* and will call towards Islam with sword. ..... He will manifest the religion as it is in reality, so that if the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace from Allah be upon him!) were alive, he would confirm it. Thus in his time there will not remain but the (original) religion pure from the (people's) views ..... Jesus, son of Mary (p.u.h.), will come down to him, near the white minaret in the eastern part of Damascus, leaning upon two angels - one on his right side and the other on his left-when the people will be in the prayer of *'asr*(afternoon)...... (Jesus p.u.h.) will break the cross and kill the swine. And al-Mahdi will die clean and pure...... And (Al-

Mahdi) appeared in the 4lh period (i.e. after tabi'in)... Then he went into seclusion, till comes the known (i.e. appointed) time."[2]

The belief was commonly known to the Shi'as also right from the early days of Islam. I do not propose to quote here from our traditions; but the poets' works were the common heritage of all the Arabs, and their Qasidahs reached within astonishingly short time from one cornor of the Arab empire to the other. Therefore the following few line from a famous Qasidah of Dfbil gain much weight as evidence, especially because they were recited in the presence of Imam ar-Rida (a.s.), the great-great-grand father of al-Mahdi. After describing the injustice done to Ahlu '1-Bayt he says:-

"Had it not been for that which / hope (to happen) today or tomorrow,

My sorro ws would ha ve torn my heart into pieces! (That thing is) the emergence of an Imam who must surely emerge,

Who will surely rise in the name of Allah, with blessings; He will separate every truth and falsehood in us, And will requite for blessings and misfortunes, Therefore O my soul!

Be happy, then again O my Soul! Be cheerful, Because that which is to come is not very far"[3]

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[2] Shaykh Muhiddiri Ibn al-'Arabi, *al-Futuhatu '1-Makkiyah,* chapter 366.

[3] Di'bil (148-246 A.H./765-860) was a stauch Shf a and one of the brightest stars of Arabic poetry. The *Qasidah* from which these lines have been taken is in praise of the *ahlul-bayt* and about injustice done to them. When the 8lh Imam 'Ali ar-Rida (a.s.) was made heir-designate of al-Ma'mun in 201 A.H./817, Di'bil went to Marv (now Mary in Turkemenislan), and recited the *Qasidah* before him. Its literary sublimity made people send its copies to far away places, and»even before Di'bil left Marv, the *Qasidah* had become famous throughout Arabia. It contained 120 *abyat (i.e.* 240 lines), and has been extensively quoted and copied by writers, historians and the scholars of literature. The *abyat* given in the text are found in the following books, among others (incidentally all these books are by Sunni authors):-

It is clear from the above that the belief in al-Mahdi was not a "rationalization after the fact"; it is based on well-known and widely accepted prophecies of the prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the Imams - a prophecy which the later events proved true.

Another irrefutable proof, that this prophecy was generally known to the Muslims right from the beginning, are those "imitation" Mahdis who appeared from time to time, beginning from the first century of Hijrah. Some Shfas thought that Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah, the 3rd son of 'Ali (a.s.), was the promised al-Mahdi; Muhammad (the purifical soul) son of'Abdullah ibn al-Hasan al-Muthanna was given the same title; al-Mansur (the 2nd Abbside Caliph) named his son Muhammad and gave him the title, al-Mahdi (158-1687 775-785) hoping to impress upon the people that his son was the Mahdi of the prophetic traditions. All these attempts to fit the prophecies on them selves, show that there must be a genuine al-Mahdi in the same way at the "parkar" pens point to the existence of a genuine "Parker" a "lifeboy" soap proves the existence of an original “Lifebouy”; and an imitation ruby loudly says that there must be a genuine ruby.

Nor is this belief a product of the putatic-pessimism of the Shi’ite community, supposedly resulting from the unending oppressions, persecutions and tragedies which the comunity was subjected to in the early centuries. This belief is not a product of pessimism; rather it is the fountain-head of optimism. Our

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(a) Abu 'i-Faraj Isfahan!, *al-Aghani,* vol. 18 p. 29, 58

(b) Ibn 'Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq,* vol. 5, p. 234 (Both write that even al-Ma'mun later asked Di'bil to recite the *Qasidahbefore* him, and uncontrollably wept on hearing it)

(c) Yaqut al-Hammu'i, *Mu'jam-ul-Udaba* vol. 4, p. 196
More and detailed referrences to the poet and the poetry may be seen in *al-Ghadirvo*. 2, p.p. 349- 3rd ed. 1387/1967; Darul-Kitab al-'Arabi, Beirut.

traditions emphsize that the best deed, after the prayer, is to wait for the "release from adversity" (i.e. reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi). We are therefore, constantly hoping for the joy and happiness, personified in Imam al-Mahdi, the Imam who is alive at this very time, and who himself is awaiting the command of Allah to reappear, so that he may strengthen the weak, and judge the oppressors. He will reappear "with out having done *Bay'ah* to any oppressor". He went into occultation because he did not want submit to any unjust ruler. His existence, his whole life, is a personification of this "rejection of injustice". Those who believe in him, know that they too have to remain steadfast in face of oppression and tyranny; they too have to remain unbending before injustice and inequity. This feeling which may be experienced but not described, creates a spiritual relationship between the Imam and his followers, a psychological rapport between the leader and the masses.

It creates hope in place of despair; it replaces weakness, defeatism and grief with strength, confidence and joy. It gives one the courage to stand up before the tyrants instead of bowing one's head before them in submission.

As one orientalist wrote, a community which eagerly looks forward to a great future, and whose members are advised to always keep their swords ready and within reach - in order that they could rush to their Imam, at whatever time the call came - can never despair of the calamities, nor can it ever lose hope.

The Islamic revolution of Iran, that has established the rule of *Shafahtor* the first time after the truce of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 14 centuries earlier, has been established by this very community which ardently believes in Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) Do you think it was the work of pessimists?

Strange as it may seem, it is the actual materialization of prophecy that has prompted majority of the Muslims to deny the presence of al-Mahdi at this time. You see, nobody disputes with

the Hindus, the Jews or the Christians regarding their awaited l()[lh] *avatar m* Messiah. It is because they are not a present fact, they are presently just an idea, which can do no harm to the evil doers. But al-Mahdi is not an idea; he is a fact, a reality, a living authority, always in readiness to come out to judge between the oppressor and the oppressed, and this aspect disturbs many people who are not yet ready to surrender themselves to the rule of Allah. They like the proverbial ostrich, try to save themselves by closing their eyes to the fact and denying the reality.

It is now clear that the belief in Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) and his establishing the rule of God on earth is based on solid foundation of the Prophet's traditions narrated from the very early days of Islam by the Sunni and Shf a *muhaddithun:* and that it was not a wishful thinking of the Shf a scholars who allegedly took refuge in that belief because the expected reappearance of the 12[th] Imam did not materialize soon.

Now, it is proposed to show that the *ghaybah* (occultation) of the Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) was not an unexpected phenomenon; it was foretold by 'Ali (a.s.) and other Imams of *Ahl ul-bayt,* books were written and poem composed especially on this subject long before the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.).

Let us begin with the *Qasidah of the* famous poet of *Ahl-ul~bayt,* as-Sayyid ibn Muhammad al-Himyari, which was composed on hundred and fifty years before the *ghaybah,* in the day of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.)

First a few words about as-Sayyid:

Abu Hashim Isma'il ibn Muhammad al-Himyari (popularly known as as-Sayyid) was born in 105 A.H., at Oman, of Ibadi parents, but became Shf a in his childhood and remained steadfast in his belief, in spite of the pressure and tyranny of his parents which compelled him to leave his home in Basrah.

He went to Kufa where he took *ahadith* from al-A'mash and others. He was a contemporary of 10 *Khalifas* (5 Umayyads, and 5 Abbasids); and died at Baghdad in the reign of Harun as-Rashid in 173, A.H. (or 178 or 179).

He is one of the three "Greatest Poets" in Islam. It has been mentioned earlier that poetry was the nearest thing to the Arabs' hearts and a good poem or *Qasidah* spread like wildfire throughout Arab empire in an amazingly short time. Also it was easier to remember and narrate. as-Sayyid's name and fame had spread throughout the Muslim world; and the brilliant aura surrounding him was un-parallelled in history. Many people had made it their duly to memori/e and recite his poems. Such people were called *Rawiyah,* and every great poet had a *Rawiyah* of his own, but as-Sayyid had twelve *Rawiyas*[4]

as-Sayyid in the beginning followed the Kaysaniyyah belief that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was the fourth Imam and that he had gone into *ghaybah* (occultation) and would re-appear near Qiyamah. Some of his poems on this theme are preserved in the books. Then he met Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.); and after seeing clear proofs from the Imam (a.s.), he came on right path and left Kaysaniyyah belief.

On accepting the true belief, he said two famous long *Qasidahs* on this subject. The first one begings with these lines:

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[4] For details of as-Sayyid's life, see the books of literary history of Arabia. A gist — with full references — may be seen in *al-Ghctdir* (by late 'Allamah al-Amini). Vol. 2 pp. 213-289; 3rd. See also:
(a) al-Kashshi, *Ikhtiyant Rijali '1-Kashshi* (Mifassasah sA!il-Bayt li Ihya'it-turath. Qum), 1404 A.HL Vol. 2, pp. 569 — 574.
(b) ash-Shaykh at-Tusi. *al-Fihrist.* QUID (Reprint, by off-set, of Najaf edition), no date, p. 82.

"When I saw people going astray in religion, I followed (Imam) Ja'far (as-Sadiq) together with those who follow him.

And I called the name of Allah, and Allah is Great — And I firmly believe that Allah pardons and forgives.[5]

Then composed another one, addressing the Imam (a.s.) in which he explained why he was misled into Kaysaniyyah belief: He says.

O Trustee of Allah and Son of His Trustee! I repent to the Beneficent God, and thereafter return

To you, from that affair which I staunchly believed, and for which I used to fight (i.e. argue) with every one.

And when I believed about the Son of Khawlah (i.e. Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah) that he was hidden, it was not because (God Forbid) I had any enmity towards the progeny of the purified one (i.e. towards Imam Zaynul 'Abedin (a.s.)

But it has been transmitted to us from the *Wasii* i Successor.) of Muhammad (i.e. from 'All a.s.) — and he was not untruthful in what he said —

That the *Valiyul-amr (the* Master of tha affair) shall be lost — will not be seen — (remaining) in hiding, as does one who is wary and waiting;

And the property of the lost one will be divided (among his relatives) as through he were buried in a raised surface (i.e. in the grave);

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[5] al-Amini, *al-Ghadir, op. cit.* pp. 244 — 246

Thus he will remain (like that) for a time, then he will rise up all of a sudden as the star, Capricorn, comes up from the horizon;

He will proceed with Allah's help from the House of his Lord, with divine sovereignty and well-arranged authority;

He will advance with his standard towards his enemies and will put them to sword exterminating them, as does a strong-willed enraged person.

O, when we were told that the Son of Khawlah (Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah) had gone in occultation, we applied our word (i.e. the above tradition) to him, and did not refute it;

And we said that he is the Mahdi and the Qa'im, by whose justice every famished person will live (in comfort).

But if you say, 'No', then the truth is what you say; and what you have ordered is the certainty — without any prejudice.

And I call rny Lord as witness that your word is the Proof (i.e. the authority) over all the creation, be they obedient or disobedient.

That the Master of the affair, and the Qa'im (towards whom my soul aspires jubilantly)

Shall have a *gfwybah,* it is necessary (for him) to disappear in that seclusion — May Allah then have His blessings on him, the hidden one.

He will then ramin (waiting like that); thereafter he will appear at his time and fill the east and the west with justice.

This is (now what 1 believe) in the secret and in the open, O Trustee of Allah! and I do not care even if I am blamed for it."[6]

Ash-Shaykh al-Mufid comments on these lines: "Look at this declaration of as-Sayyid which clearly mentions the *ghaybah.* How could he say it [in such a definite manner); had he not heard it from his Imams (a.s.) — and his Imams heard it from the Prophet, May Allah's blessings be on him and his progeny. Otherwise, how was it possible for a speaker to tell something and then for that thing to happen in exactly the same manner as he had said. Without a single letter going wrong?[7]

In this background, and keeping in view the frequent burnings of the Shi'a libraries right from the fourth century of *hijrah* (when the books of the matchless library of Shaykh at-Tusi were burned several times) to the present time (when the Israeli forces occupying South Lebanon burned to ashes the library of late as-Sayyid Mohsin al-Amin al-'Amili, which contained thousands of rare manuscripts not found anywhere else), the above-mentioned lines of as-Sayyid, even if not supported by any other argument, would have been enough to prove that the *ghaybah* of Imam al-Mahdi was a phenomenon foretold by the Prophet and the Imams (Blessings and peace be on him and them), especially as they were addressed to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) saying that it was the Imam (a.s.) who had said these things to as-Sayyid al-Himyari.

But we also have *ahadithoi'ihc* Imams to this effect, one of wich is quoted here from as-Shaykh al-Mufid's small *Fifth Risalah on Ghaybah.* He writes:

"First of them is the *hadfth* narrated by the Sunnis and the Shfas both; and it is reported by Kumayl ibn Ziyad. He says: "\ eame to the Leader of the Faithful (Ali a.s.), and he was scratching

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[6] al-Amini, *al-Ghudir, op. cif.* pp. 400 - 401
[7] al-Mufld *Fifth Risalah on Ghaybah,* pp. 400-4001

on the ground. I said to him: "O my Master! Why are you scratching on the ground? is it because of any longing for it?" He said: "By God! I have never desired it even for a moment. But I was thinking about the ninth from the progeny of Husayn (a.s.). He it is who will fill the earth with equity and justice, as it would have been filled of injustice and oppression. There will be for him a *ghaybah* (occultation) during which the liars will entertain doubts (about his existence). O Kumayl, son of Ziyad, it is essential for the earth to have a *Hujjah (* = proof, i.e. Prophet or Imam) — either manifest with well-known personality, or hidden (and) unknown — so that the proofs of God may not be discontinued."

Al-Mufid says that "The *hadfth* is long; we have quoted here only the portion that is relevant to our topic.[8]

It should be noted that, according to Shaykh al-Mufid, this *hadith* was narrated by Sunni narrators too in those early days. He could not make such a claim lightly when he knew that enemies of his faith would pounce on him if he wrote a single word without proof, or made any baseless claim.

The traditions that the *al-Qa 'ini* al-Mahdi will remain concealed from the public for a very long time — a phenomenon which would make a lot of people go astray — were circulating in the Shi'a world since the days of 'Ali (a.s.).

Apart from the clear, detailed and unambiguous declaration of as-Sayyid al-Himyari, there are some other historical developments that re-confirm the existence and impact of those traditions.

When Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) died in 183/799, after spending a long time in the prison of Harun ar-Rashid, a huge

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[8] al-Mufid, *The Fifth Risalah on Ghaybah,* p. 400.

amount of his money had accumulated with many of his agents in various towns. Among them Ziyad Qandi had seventy thousand dinars with him, and 'Ali ibn Abi Hamzah al-Bata'ini had thirty thousand. They and many others like them had spent the whole money dishonestly in their personal investments and domestic use. When Imam' Ali ar-Rida (a.s.) wrote to those agents directing them to bring the money to him, many felt trapped. And the easiest way out for them seemed to deny the death of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). They said that Imam ar-Kazim (a.s.) was the al-Qa'im al-Mahdi, who had gone into seclusion, according to the *ahadith* of the previous Imams saying that al-Mahdi would remain hidden; they claimed that it was Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) who was al-Mahdi and was now in *ghaybah.* This was the origin of the Waqifah sect.[9] What we are concerned with here, is the fact that some leaders of the Waqifah group wrote books on *ghaybah,* in which they enumerated the traditions narrated from the Imams about the *ghaybah,* of course, they wrongly tried to apply those sayings to Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). One of them was al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Suma'ah al-Kufi. He had written thirty books, one of them being *kitab al-Ghaybah.* He had died in 263 A.H., only three years after the death of our 1 l[th] Imam Hasan al-'Askari (a.s.). His *kitabu al-ghaybah* was available in the Shi'a circles, as-shaykh at-Tusi (who had *ijazah* to narrate it) had a copy in his library, as may be seen in his *al-fihrist(lihe* Catalogue)[10]

These traditions were so well-known that many non-Shfa writers also collected them in book form. I have mentioned one book earlier; three other books are given here:-

1. 'Ubbad in Ya'qub al-Rawajini was a Sunni *Miihaddith,* who died in 250 A.M. i.e. in the life of the 10th Imam, "Ali an-Naqi

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[9] al-Kashshi, *op, cit.* pp. 755—774; 705—707; 742—744; an-Nijashi, *al-FihrisL* Qum, 1398, p.
al-Khoui, *Miijum Rijal al-hadith,* Najaf, 1975, vol. 11, pp. 229—246

[10] at-Tusi, *op. cit.* pp. 51-52.

(a.s.). He wrote a book, *Kitab Akhbar a/-Mahdi (Book* of traditions on al-Mahdi a.s.).[11]

2. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Jamhur al-'Ammi al-Basri was a companion of the 8[lh] Imam " Ali ar-Rida (a.s.) who had narrated some traditions from him. He was a Ghali.[12] He wrote many books. Two of his books are named: (a) *Kitab Sahib-iz-Zaman a.s.* and (b) *Kitab Waqt Khuruj al-Qa im a.s.* (i.e. the Book on the Time of the Appearance of al-Qa'im a.s.).[13]

3. The Shi'as repeatedly asked the Imams (a.s.) about leaders of the Waqifah and other such sects, what they should do with their books. The reply was always the same:

(Take their narratives, and leave aside their views). It was for this reason that our *\ilama* 'used to take the *ahadith* narrated by non-Ithna-ashari Shi'as too (provided they fulfilled other necessary conditions). And I am glad thai they did so, and not only for the sake of historical records.

4. By narrating *Kitab ul-Ghaybah* of al-Hasan ihn Muhammad ibn Suma'ah and those books of others and including them in his *al-Fihrist,* as-Shaykh at-Tusi has shut the mouths of those who think that the belief in the *Ghaybah* of al-Mahdi al-Qa'im was a consipracy of the Shfa scholars hatched when the expected reappearance of the 12[th] Imam (a.s.) did not materialize. These non- Shi'a books are enough to prove that the belief that al-Qa'im al-Mahdi (a.s.) would remain in *ghaybah* (occultation) was the common heritage of all Muslims — Sunnis and other Shi'a sects; and that books were written on this topic long before the birth of the 12[lh] Imam (a.s.).

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[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 119-120

[12] Mir Baqir Damad, TYiiqah on Rijal Kasitashi, Qum, 1404 A.H., Vol. 1, pp. 415—416

[13] at-Tusi, *op. ciL,* p. 146